

founded the new order Strepsiptera on two genera only, *Stylops melittæ*, parasitic on bees, and *Xenos rossii* (*Ichneumon vesparum*, Rossi) and *peckii*, parasitic on wasps. *Stylops melittæ* had, however, been previously described by Kirby in his 'Monographia Apum Angliæ,' and his graphic description of its discovery will be familiar to all entomologists.

A few other species were subsequently described by Kirby and others; but for many years the number was very small, and these curious insects were usually regarded as an aberrant family of Coleoptera. Prof. Pierce brings forward cogent reasons for considering these insects to form a separate order, and now estimates it as comprising no less than 8 families, 37 genera, and 120 species, many of which are described as new in the present work.

It now appears that Orthoptera, Hemiptera, and Homoptera are liable to the attacks of Strepsiptera, as well as the Hymenoptera, which have long been known to be infested by them; and the physiological changes induced in the hosts by these parasites are of much importance.

We commend this important monograph to entomologists interested in curious forms of insects, and in physiological inquiries.

W. F. K.

*Indian Insect Life. A Manual of the Insects of the Plains (Tropical India).* By H. MAXWELL-LEFROY, M.A., F.E.S., F.Z.S., Entomologist, Imperial Department of Agriculture for India; Author of 'Indian Insect Pests,' &c. Assisted by F. M. HOWLETT, B.A., F.E.S., Second Entomologist, Imperial Department of Agriculture for India. (Published under the Authority of the Government of India.) Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa. 4to. Calcutta and Simla, 1909. Pp. xii, 786. Pls. lxxxiv. and figs. 536.

UNQUESTIONABLY this is the handsomest and one of the most important works which have yet appeared on the insects of India. Hitherto the author has chiefly been known by his 'Indian Insect Pests' and 'Indian Museum Notes,' but his new book shows him to have a very comprehensive knowledge of all branches of entomology, especially as represented in the fauna of India. The Introduction deals with general subjects, and will appeal to many readers who have only a secondary interest in entomology. It contains discussions on Diagnosis, Zoological Position, Instinct and Habit, Classification, Number of Species, Nomenclature, Identification, Entomology in India, Zoogeographical Divisions, Food and Habitat, and Insects and Man.

In 1881 Blanford estimated the known species of insects found in British India at 12,100. At present Prof. Maxwell-Lefroy estimates the number of known species at 29,700. It is impossible even to estimate the actual number, for the fauna even of Britain is very far from exhausted; and the last part of the 'Transactions of

the Entomological Society of London' includes nine new genera and ten new species of Mymaridæ (Micro-Hymenoptera) captured within a few miles of London, and a new genus and species of Noctuidæ captured near Aberdeen. We may also note that within the last few weeks the discovery of a new species of Mymaridæ (said to be the smallest insect known) has been announced from India.

The orders of insects are discussed in the following series:—Aptera, Orthoptera, Neuroptera, Hymenoptera, Coleoptera, Lepidoptera, Thysanoptera, Diptera, and Rhynchota. There are also separate essays under each order on various subjects of general interest, such as Deceptive Colouring, Relative Duration of Life, Sex, Myrmecophilous Insects, Insects as Food, Silk, Blood-sucking Insects, Song in Insects, &c.; and the book concludes with a Plant Index and a General Index.

The better-known families of insects are treated with much detail, and are freely illustrated both with plain and coloured figures. The lesser-known families are more briefly dealt with, but the available sources of information are clearly indicated, and special attention is given to insect pests of all kinds.

We can hardly speak too highly of this most useful and comprehensive work. The only faults which we can find in it are its weight (which in comparison to its size is only approached by that of Comstock's 'Manual for the Study of Insects') and its size. These defects will make it difficult for a travelling entomologist to add it to his impedimenta; and we might perhaps be allowed to suggest to the painstaking author and his colleague that a small "pocket" manual of Indian entomology might be a great boon to entomologists travelling in India, without interfering with the usefulness or circulation of the larger work. W. F. K.

*The Fauna of British India, including Ceylon and Burma.* Published under the Authority of the Secretary of State for India in Council. Edited by A. E. SHIPLEY, M.A. &c. Dermaptera (Earwigs). By MALCOLM BURR, D.Sc. 8vo. Pp. xviii, 217. Pls. 10 (1 col.) and 16 text-figures.

IN the present half-volume of the 'Fauna Indica,' the first published under the editorship of Prof. Shipley, Dr. Burr has given an excellent Monograph of the Earwigs of British India; and as the group is a comparatively small one (135 species are described in the work before us, a number that could doubtless be easily quadrupled in a few years if collectors in India took up the group systematically), the author has been able to deal with it very fully, and to figure more than a hundred species, often with enlarged details of legs, forceps, &c.

Much useful information is also given about structure and habits, bibliography, geographical distribution, collecting and preserving,